NEW MEXICO ARCHITECT

MAY-JUNE 1959 VOL.1 NO.3

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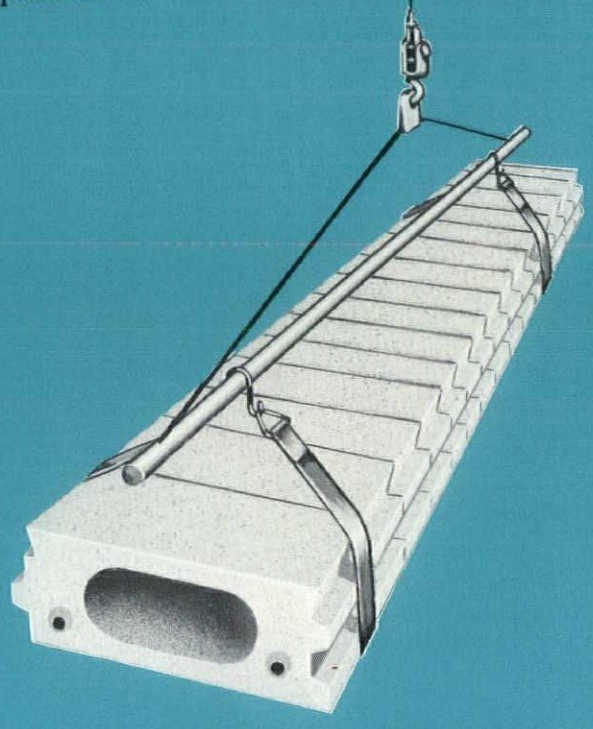

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Contents

A Message From The President

With this our third issue of the magazine, I would suggest that control of all phases pertaining thereto are rapidly being realized.

Certainly I did not expect to be sending a message out to you in this issue as the fiscal year ended April 30, 1959. The action of the Chapter returning, with one exception, all of the present officers into another year of service was quite definite, so under those conditions I will be talking to you through this column for some months to come. Believe me, I am most humble and certainly proud that the Chapter saw fit to return us to officership.

The one exception as referred to above, was the replacement of Director Jason P. Moore by James S. Liberty. While we of the Chapter are now aware of the pre-arranged nomination of Jim Liberty, we will miss Jason, as he was always faithful in his work in the Chapter. His counsel was both sought and regarded quite highly. Jim on the other hand is, we feel, a very fine replacement. He has worked diligently for many years on various committees, most important of which is the Scholarship and Awards Committee. He will continue heading this committee, as it is vertical in structure and therefor he is a member of the national committee of the same title. Jim, also as our General Chairman of the 1959 Annual Conference Committee, is doing a grand job. We welcome Jim to the directorship of the Chapter.

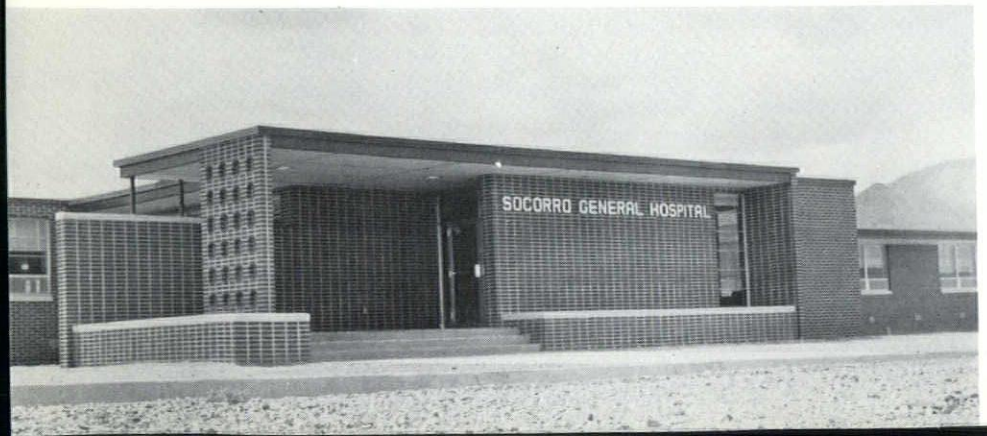
Speaking of Committees, you will find elsewhere in this issue a complete breakdown of the "Chapter Structure." I suggest that this issue be retained in your files for reference thereto. This publishing of the "structure" herein obviously precludes the necessity of issuing a Prospectus, as has been done in recent years.

Tomás Brillembourg

Roosevelt County Court House (1939)
Contractor: G. S. Lambie
Cost: $400,000.00

Architecture By Merrell

Citizens Bank (1957)
Tucumcari, New Mexico
Contractor: Currell & Neale
Cost: $47,000.00



Socorro General Hospital (1957)
Contractor: John C. Cornell
Cost: $350,000.00

Profile of an Architect: Robert E. Merrell

Robert E. Merrell, of the Clovis architectural firm of Schaefer, Merrell and Pendleton, can say he saw the promise of New Mexico before most present-day New Mexicans did. Mr. Merrell came to New Mexico in 1931 as Supervisory Architect for the Southern Nationals Hotel Co. of Galveston on the constuction of the Hotel Clovis. When the job was completed, Merrell stayed in Clovis and established his own architectural firm under the name of Robert E. Merrell, Architect.

Mr. Merrell was born in May, 1895, at Keller, Texas, near Ft. Worth. He received a B.S. degree in architecture from Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1919, and his M.A. in Architecture at the same school in 1921. Following graduation, he worked for three months in Europe, making restoration drawings for historical buildings at Rheims and Verdun under the direction of French architects. He spent another four months in travel and study in Europe before returning to the United States.

"My first architectural job was in the offices of the college architect of Texas A&M," Merrell said. He gained practical experience by working as a draftsman in the office of Saninet, Staats and Hedrick, Architects and Engineers, Ft. Worth, for five years, and spent another four years in the offices of Steinman & Son and Livesay & Weideman, Architects, in Beaumont, Texas.

After opening his own office in Clovis, Mr. Merrell did a junior high school building, the Curry County Courthouse and jail, and Memorial Hospital in Clovis; Eugene Mann School, an addition to a junior high school and an elementary school, the Roosevelt County Courthouse and jail, in Portales; and two women's dormitories, the Aviation Building and the Student Union Building at New Mexico State College.

Mr. Merrell was registered as an Architect in New Mexico in 1934, the year that the registration law became effective, and served on the State Board of Architectural Examiners from 1938 through 1944.

Mr. Merrell formed the firm of Schaefer and Merrell with Jerry M. Schaefer in 1944, and the firm was reorganized to admit Warren F. Pendleton as a partner in 1953.

The firm of Schaefer, Merrell and Pendleton has worked on many projects throughout New Mexico, including schools at Gallup and Lovington, high schools in Eunice and Lords-

(Continued on Page 20)

Architectural Education: Chapter Helps Students

By Don P. Schlegel
Assoc. Prof. of Architecture
Division of Architecture
University of New Mexico

No. 2 of a Series

The teaching of Architecture in any university is teaching by substitution, for Architecture starts with a client, is disciplined by the site, program, materials and erection, and is completed when the building is occupied. No school can educate in this way. It can only create hypothetical situations without benefit of client or building program.

The gap between the practice of architecture and the education of architects bcomes wider as one realizes who is educating these future architects. The faculty usually consists of men who teach design, but who have never really designed a building (myself, for instance). Or they may teach other aspects of architecture although they have little practical experience in the subject. In this academic environment the realities of architecture are seldom discussed.

How can a school overcome this deficiency? At UNM, the Educational Committee of the New Mexico Chapter, AIA, offered a solution which is peculiar to this University.

In the teaching of design, for example, a local architect is consulted in the writing of a program. This architect has been selected by the Educational Committee of the Chapter for his experience in this particular type of problem. The architect then meets with the students, explains the program, and goes over the many problems which are involved in this type of building.

As the student evolves the design, the architect reviews each problem, and gives his professional advice to the student. (He does this without financial remuneration). At times, various people are bought in to act as clients, and engineers are brought in to discuss mechanical and electrical equipment of buildings. To a great extent, this type of educational program gives the students a more realistic view of the actual practice of architecture.

This donated time is no small item, for each design class experiences the advice of an architect on six problems a year for a four year period. This means that each year, twenty-four New Mexico achitects donate anywhere from three to fifteen hours of their time to student education and the student has received the advice, criticism and theories of as many practicing architects as possible. As a result, architectural students at UNM are better equipped to practice their chosen profession.

If the Architectural Division at UNM has succeeded in giving students a truer picture of the practice of architecture by bridging this substitution gap, we must give the credit to the architects who participate, and to the New Mexico Chapter, AIA. ◇

Traveling Exhibit

Architecture in New Mexico: Discussion and Analysis

By David Gebhard
Director
Roswell Museum and Art Center

"Contemporary Architecture of New Mexico I," is the first in a series of traveling architectural exhibitions jointly sponsored by the New Mexco chapter, AIA, the Division of Architecture of the University of New Mexico, the Southwest Design Council and the Roswell Museum and Art Center. The purpose of these exhibitions is to bring the current architecture of New Mexico to the attention of people throughout the state. With this basic concept in mind the display has been designed in a very simple and direct manner so that it may be shown in banks, stores, small libraries and schools in the smaller as well as the larger communities of the state.

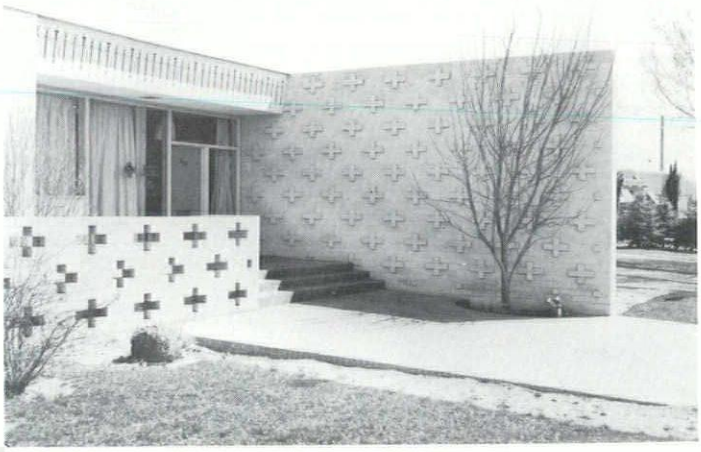
Through a series of panels, photo-murals and colored transparencies the current exhibit presents eight structures which have been designed and built from 1946 to 1958. While the basis for the jury's selection was that of quality of design, a conscious attempt was made to encompass a variety of architectural points of view. This variety both adds to, and to a certain extent, limits any overall unity in the exhibition. In the final analysis the very range of design indicates the underlying condition and state of the present architectural scene in New Mexico.

It is obvious that the current scene is in no way one of unity of purpose or point of view. Without question the architecture of our region is still in a transitional state, between a type of regional eclecticism inherited from the 1920's and 1930's, which still has its strong supporters and adherents, and the new machine architecture, which has been able to firmly entrench itself in even the smallest of our cities and towns.

Between these two extremes lies another small but articulate group, which has sought to produce a regional architecture based upon the historical and environmental aspects of the area and on the acceptance of the machine and mass production. The latter, like many human compromises, has produced some of the best as well as some of the worst designs to be found in our state. To one degree or another at least five of the buildings in this exhibition have conscientiously attempted to develop a regional architecture for the Southwest.

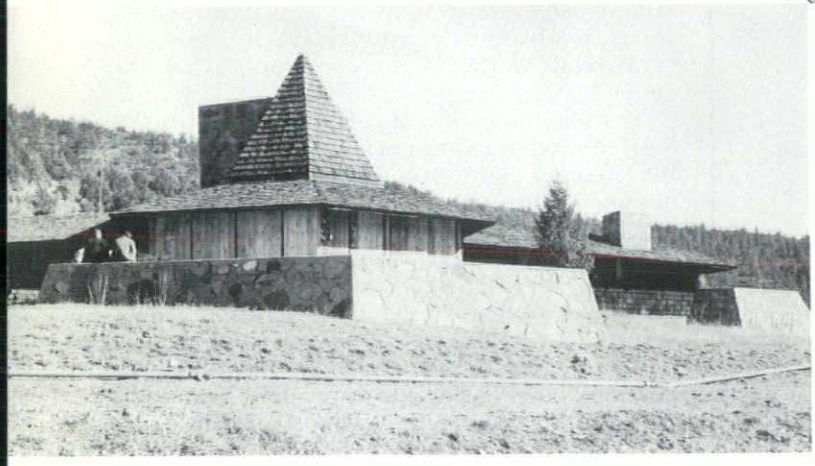
The closest to the "adobe" styles of the past is the Santa Fe house for Paul Rutledge (1958), designed by Joseph Wertz. While it

(Continued on Page 14)

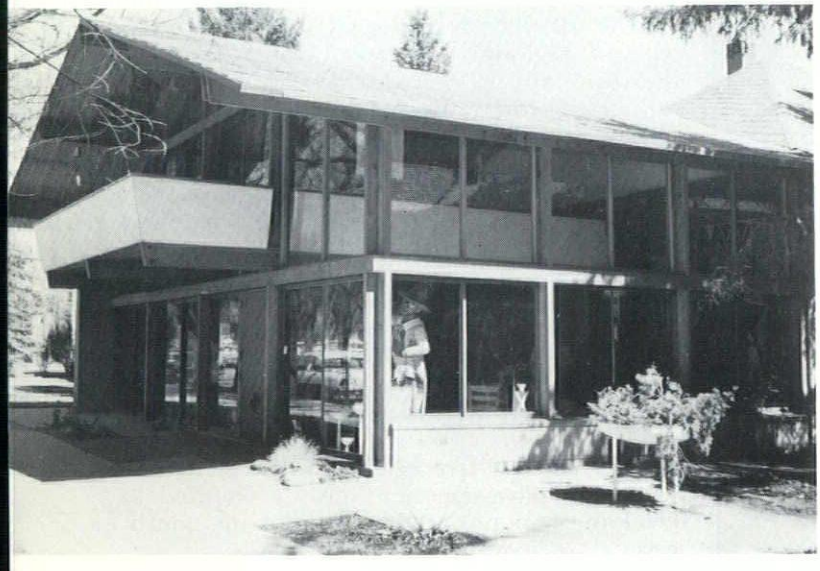


Arnold Friedman House, Pecos
Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect (1946)

The Blue Cross Building, Albuquerque
Designed by Ferguson, Stevens, Mallory and Pearl, Architects (1954)

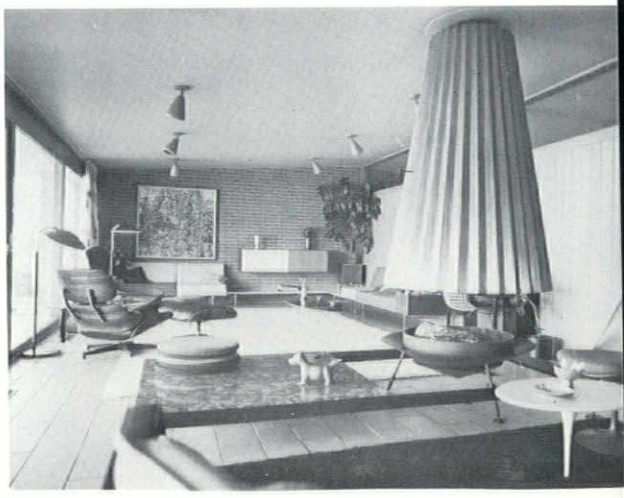


Traveling Exhibit: Architecture In New Mexic

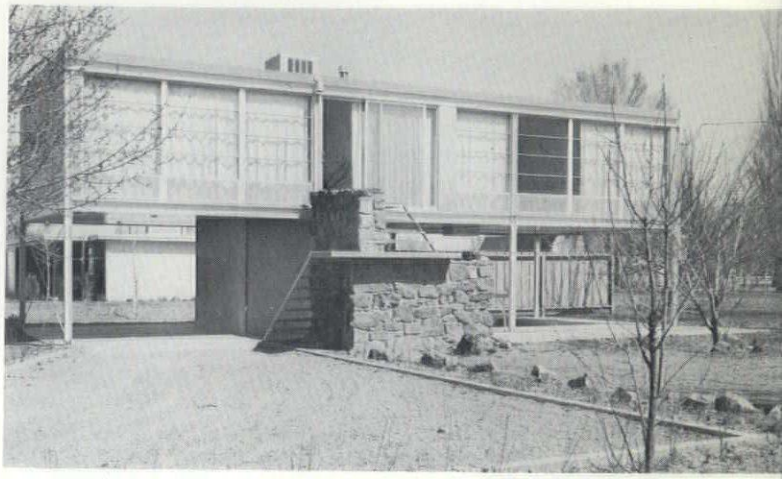


The Centerline, Inc., Santa Fe
Designed by John Conron, Architect, and David Lent (1955)

Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Rose House, Albuquerque
Designed by Flatow, Moore, Bryan and Fairburn, Architects (1956). Photo by Don P. Schlegel



Paul Rutledge House, Santa Fe
Designed by Joseph Wertz (1958)



Anita Carr Shear House, Albuquerque
Designed by Anita Carr Shear (1957)

Santa Fe Opera Shed, Santa Fe
Designed by McHugh & Hooker, &
Bradley P. Kidder and Associates,
Architects (1957). Photo by Tyler Dingee

The Simms Building, Albuquerque
Designed by Flatow, Moore, Bryan and
Fairburn, Architects (1952)
Photo by Shulman

is true that it shares many similarities with past architectural forms, it never the less represents one of the best integrated designs in the exhibition. The key to its success lies in the sensitive handling of forms and materials and the orientation of the house and secondary buildings around the enclosed patio. In this house the patio serves the purpose of visually uniting as well as spatially separating the various functions of the house.

Another building in which the architect has sought to develop a regional form of design is that of the Blue Cross and Surgical Services Building (1954) in Albuquerque, designed by Ferguson, Stevens, Mallory and Pearl. Certain elements of the design have been worked out quite thoroughly, especially the patterns of blocks in the entrance screen and the low parapet wall which surrounds the front terrace. Other features, such as the stylized row of Navajo-inspired human figures painted on the roof facia over the entrance, appear to be an example of a rather forced and empty type of regional expression.

The Blue Cross Building is an excellent illustration of the possibilities of a regional architecture (especially in its use of concrete block), but at the same time it dramatically displays the many pitfalls inherent in this type of approach.

Two other structures, both located in or near Santa Fe, convey a sympathetic rapport with the land and its traditions. These are the store building for Centerline, Inc. (1955), designed by John Conron and David Lent, and the Santa Fe Opera Shed (1957), by McHugh & Hooker, & Bradley P. Kidder and Associates. Both of these buildings are fundamentally of wood and are therefore quite different in concept and feeling to the usual massiveness inherent in adobe or concrete architecture.

If either one of these buildings had been constructed at different sites, they might well have appeared completely out of place, for their post and lintel construction of wood shares many similarities to that of the West Coast. But by a sensitive handling of materials and forms which have fully taken into account their respective locales, they have been able to arrive at a solution which is as much at home with the landscape of northern New Mexico as any past architectural form.

The last of the buildings which has sought to convey a regional concept is Frank Lloyd Wright's summer house for Arnold Friedman (1946), located in the upper Pecos valley. This house forcefully illustrates this architect's great versatility in being able to design a building which both bears his undeniable and very personal stamp, and at the same time appears to be in complete harmony with its site and surroundings. Like many of Wright's designs this building combines a classical, well organized plan with a romantic, highly informal sense of interior and exterior space. Also typical of Wright's work is the fact that the passing of time, with its process of weathering, has only enhanced the repose and harmony of the building with its environment.

The final group of buildings in this exhibition, the Albuquerque house designed by Anita Carr Shear (1957), the house for Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Rose (1956), and the Simms Building (1952), both in Albuquerque and designed by Flatow, Moore, Bryan and Fairburn, represent what could be termed an international point of view. In the case of these buildings it is obvious that the designers strongly felt that a meaningful solution must be the result of a utilization of mass production techniques of our industrial society, and only secondarily (if at all) that a structure reflect any regional characteristics.

Within the contemporary international machine tradition this group of buildings will easily hold its own with buildings constructed in other areas of the United States, South America and Europe. No one today would question the machine basis of these designs, although strong reservations might be made relating to the manner in which these products have been used. While it is certainly true that a designer may consciously ignore historical aspects of the area in which he is working, it is open to question whether they should at the same time have ignored the many environmental conditions which brought older solutions about.

The fact that in recent years machine architecture has become the accepted style throughout almost all of the western world is both a major asset and a serious limitation inherent in these buildings.

By seeking to present a cross-section of the current architecture of New Mexico, it is hoped that the present exhibition and those that are to follow will contribute in their own way to a continual reappraisal and evaluation of our architectural scene. In this way it may be possible for the lay public, as well as the architects, to discover the overall pattern of the forest from that of the individual trees which compose it. ◇

Students Receive Awards

Architectural students at the University of New Mexico received 22 awards and prizes at the Student Chapter of the AIA Awards Dinner May 16 at Leonard's Restaurant in Albuquerque.

The awards, listed by Prof. John J. Heimerich, are:

Two student memberships in the American Society for Testing Materials, awarded to two outstanding senior students in Architecture by the ASTM: John Muller and James Nicks.

A book on architecture, presented to the winner of an all-student competition for Architectural design by the Student AIA Chapter: Lee Daily.

Albuquerque Home Builders' cash awards to students in a competition for the best residential design: first prize, $100, to Donald Henry; second prize, $75, to George Bolling; third prize, $50, to Milton Creek; fourth prize, $25, divided between Larry Titman and Leroy Velasquez.

Current architectural books awarded by the Architectural faculty at UNM to the outstanding student in each architectural design class: first-year student, Robert D. Hyatt; second-year student, Lee A. Daily; third-year student, Donald J. Henry; fourth-year student, Deryl E. Dick; senior student, Roy E. Short.

A slide rule presented to an outstanding freshman by Pickett & Eckel: Robert Torres.

The Vemco Prize in Architecture, a set of Vemco drawing instruments awarded to an outstanding sophomore student in Architecture: Arthur Fu.

A scholarship consisting of $137.50 and a book on architecture, awarded to a fourth-

(Continued on Page 22)

Program — Albuquerque
Lawrence A. Garcia, Chairman; Donald P. Stevens and Melvin M. Selles.

Program — Santa Fe
John P. Conron, Chairman; Urban Weldner (Associate); Philippe de M. Register.

Program — South and East
W. Kern Smith, Chairman; Frank M. Standhardt.

Chapter Affairs
Bradley P. Kidder, Chairman; Kenneth S. Clark; John Gaw Meem; Leo Wolgamood.

Membership
Robert C. Mallory, Chairman; Foster H. Hyatt; Glenn L. Krauth (Associate).

Public Relations — Magazine
Philippe de M. Register, Chairman; Richard E. Halford; Irene von Horvath; Jason P. Moore, liaison; W. Kern Smith, liaison.

Education
George C. Pearl, Chairman; James S. Liberty; Jason P. Moore; Don P. Schlegel.

Awards and Scholarships
James S. Liberty, Chairman; George C. Pearl; Jason P. Moore; Don P. Schlegel.

Hospital and Health
Donald P. Stevens, Chairman; Alfred E. Pfeufer; Lawrence P. Johnston.

Professional and Office Practice

AIA-NMSPE Joint Council
George S. Wright, Chairman; Walter A. Gathman; Richard P. Milner.

Preservation of Historic Buildings
John Gaw Meem, Chairman; Kenneth M. Saunders; Robert Plettenberg (Associate).

Research
William E. Burk, Jr., Chairman; John J. Heimerich; Michael Del Mastro (Associate).

Collaboration, Design Professions
Francis E. Stanley, Chairman; Mary Louise Grace; Richard S. Clark (Associate).

Home Building Industry
Garland D. Bryan, Chairman; Robert G.

tructure Outlined

Biddle; William H. Hunter (Associate).

AIA-AGC Joint Committee
George S. Wright, Chairman; James S. Liberty, Arthur W. Marshall, Jr.

Nominations
William E. Burk, Jr., Chairman; Bradley P. Kidder; Donald P. Stevens.

School Buildings
Max Flatow.

Community Development
Robert W. Fairburn.

Intra-City Relations (Extension)
Frank M. Standhardt, Chairman; James A. Burran, Jr.; Wilbur T. Harris.

Liaison — AIA Associates
Clarence W. O'Marra.

Liaison — AIA Junior Associates
Harlow S. Richards.

Liaison — UNM Student Chapter
Richard W. Waggoner.

1959 Western Mountain Regional AIA Conference Committee
James S. Liberty, General Conference Chairman; Philippe de M. Register, Liaison; Arthur W. Dekker, Secretary to Conference; Donald P. Stevens, Committee on Facilities; William E. Burk, Jr., Committee on Program and Speakers; Walter A. Gathman, Committee on Publicity and Printing; W. Kern Smith, Committee on Reception and Greeters; Eugene A. Hanneman, Committee on Registration and Information; George S. Wright, Committee on Recreation and Transportation; Jason P. Moore, Committee on Architectural Exhibits; George C. Pearl, Committee on Craftsmanship Awards; John J. Heimerich, Committee on Finance; Kenneth S. Clark, Committee on Producers' Council; Richard W. Waggoner and Robert J. Budnick, Student Chapter Representatives; Mrs. W. Miles Brittelle, Sr., and Mrs. Arthur W. Dekker, Women's Activities. ◇

A model of the Acoma Elementary School under construction in Albuquerque is shown above. The roof lift-slab is the second one to be constructed in New Mexico, and the dome section is the first of its kind to be installed in the state. In this view, facing southeast, the administrative area is in the right center, the classroom complexes at each corner, and the all-purpose room under the dome. The smaller building at the left is a possible addition and is not included in the present project. Architects are Flatow, Moore, Bryan and Fairburn, Albuquerque.

Acoma School: State's First Lift-Slab Dome

The Acoma Elementary School, now under construction in the northeast heights in Albuquerque, is a unique building in many ways.

It is the first New Mexico building to have a lift-slab dome.

It is the second New Mexico building to have a lift-slab roof.

And it is heated and cooled by air forced through trenches under the building — and ventilated as it is heated or air conditioned.

"We feel the building provides economy in construction and operation, as well as being able to maintain a good appearance with a minimum of maintenance," commented Jason Moore of Flatow, Moore, Bryan and Fairburn, Albuquerque, architects for the school.

The most apparent new feature in the building is the lift-slab roof, which is being raised in four sections over the 162 by 282-foot structure.

The procedure is this: after the concrete slab floor of the building was ready, paper forms impregnated with plastic were placed on the floor. The forms, made by Lawrence Paper Company of Lawrence, Kansas, are 30 inches square, and their shape gives the ceiling a waffle-like appearance—hence the name of the type of slab. Allowance was made for four skylights over each of the 22 classrooms, and the roof sections span 30 feet between heavy reinforced concrete columns.

After the forms were ready, the reinforcing steel rods were put in place. Then the concrete was poured around the rods into the forms.

The slabs now are being jacked up into position by the Vagtbord Company of California, specialists in this type of operation.

The four sections of the roof include two 81 by 162-foot slabs, each weighing 1,450,000 pounds; a smaller 120 by 42-foot slab, and the dome slab, weighing 1,620,000 pounds, which is set in a 105 by 120-foot roof section. The dome slab is heavier than the others partly because of the raised dome, which has a 30-foot diameter, and partly because there are fewer "waffle" sections and more solid sections in that slab.

The two larger slabs are at the east and west sides of the building, over classroom areas. The dome slab is in the south center part of the building, over an all-purpose room, the cafeteria, kitchen, and passageways; and the small slab is in the north center of the building, over the administrative area and the entrance to the building.

"A feature of the building I am particularly pleased with is the heating system devised by Bridgers and Paxton," commented Mr. Moore. "It's one of the most ingenius things I've

(Continued on Page 22)

Profile: Merrell

burg, an elementary school at Truth or Consequences, and the Roosevelt County Hospital at Portales. More recent work of the firm includes the Mimbres Memorial Hospital at Deming and the Socorro General Hospital at Socorro; and school construction including the Administration Building, Library Building, Stadium and Memorial Tower at New Mexico A&M College; and buildings at Eastern New Mexico University at Portales.

Works presently underway include a new men's dormitory at the University of New Mexico; the Natatorium at Eastern New Mexico University; school work at Lovington; and the Mimbres Valley Bank at Deming.

Mr. Merrell married Bille Eloise Beard May 16, 1925, at Ft. Worth. They live at 1401 Axtell Street in Clovis.

"I have served on one or two committees for the New Mexico Chapter of AIA," Merrell said, "but mostly I have been an 'Indian,' no chief."

Mr. Merrell has been a "chief" in bringing structural beauty to the New Mexico scene. His Roosevelt County Courthouse, shown on page 6, retains the massiveness of most such structures, but avoids the pseudo-classical construction cliches associated with such buildings. His Socorro General Hospital is simple and functional, with the beauty inherent in simplicity. The other building produced by Mr. Merrell are testimonials to the breadth of his imagination and the consistency of his artistic taste.

Robert E. Merrell has given New Mexico the benefit of his ability and experience for 28 years. Whatever rewards he has received he has earned. ◇

Architecture is not a question of dimensions, but of proportions. It is a beautiful and serious game of space.—*Willen Dudok.*

Convention Speakers Named

Three major speakers have accepted invitations to speak at the Eighth Western Mountain Regional Confernce of the AIA October 8-10 at Western Skies Hotel in Albuquerque.

The speakers are C. H. Topping, Senior Architectural and Civil Consultant, Design Division, E.I. du Pont de Nemours Co., Inc.; Herbert H. Swinburne, AIA, of the firm of Nolan and Swinburne, Philadelphia; and Dr. E. J. Workman, President of the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, Socorro.

Mr. Topping will speak at the luncheon Oct. 8; Mr. Swinburne at the luncheon Oct. 9; and Dr. Workman at the Annual Conference Banquet Oct. 10.

William E. Burk, Jr., Chairman of the Committee on Program and Speakers, said arrangements are being made for two other speakers at the Oct. 8 dinner and Oct. 10 luncheon.

Dr. Workman, noted for his wartime work on the proximity fuse, has been president of the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology since 1946, and has created much prestige for the school. He holds degrees from Whitman College, Stanford University and the University of Virginia, and has taught at several schools, including Reed College in Oregon, the California Institute of Technology, and the University of New Mexico. Dr. Workman also is director of research and development in atmospheric physics and ordnance at NMIM&T.

Mr. Swinburne is a well-known Eastern architect, and is a member of the Committee on Research of the American Institute of Architects. ◇

Acoma School

seen." Bridgers and Paxton are consulting mechanical engineers in Albuquerque.

The system involves a series of trenches about three feet square running under the building. Hot water pipes were placed in the trenches—through which a man can crawl—to facilitate any repairs which might become necessary. Basically, however, the trenches are used to conduct air into the various rooms.

In winter, the air is heated by coils as it enters the classroom through registers in the floor. The rooms average two registers each, and each room has its own set of controls—which takes care of the common schoolroom complaint of too much or too little heat.

In summer, or when the building must be cooled, adiabatic evaporative coolers located in the mechanical rooms are put into operation, so that the air is cooled as it enters the trenches.

The Acoma School has no windows as such. It has floor-to-ceiling glass sliding doors facing the open-air walkways between sections of the building, and an average of four skylights per classroom, but no conventional windows.

The northwest section covers four classrooms, mechanical and storage space, and toilets. The administrative section, including space for a secretary and office, a book room, nurse's room, teachers' lounge and bathrooms, and principal's office, adjoins the northwest section. An enclosed but uncovered teachers' patio extends out from the teachers' lounge.

The fifth major portion of the building is the all-purpose room, roughly circular, and the cafeteria kitchen, both in the south center of the building.

"The construction cost comes to about $8.50 per square foot of roof area. This includes the overhangs, so the figure doesn't give the actual classroom area cost, but it still is a low figure," Mr. Moore said.

K. L. House is general contractor for the building. The total cost of the building will be about $382,000. ◇

Student Awards

year student in Architecture by the New Mexico Chapter, AIA (the scholarship to be divided for tuition for the first and second semesters): Leon A. Ross, Jr.

Tile Council of America's awards to the winning students in a competition in architectural design: first prize, $25, Gerald P. Adkins; second prize, $15, Richard W. Waggoner; third prize, $10, divided between Lee A. Daily and John C. McKinley.

The Allied Arts Competition of the Illuminating Engineering Society prizes to students in Architecture for the winning entries in a competition in illuminating design: first prize, $25, to W. Miles Brittelle, Jr.; second prize, $15, to R. Douglas Kelley; and third prize, $10, to Robert C. Ponto. ◇

Mr. Edmund R. Purves
1735 New York Avenue NW
Washington 6, D. C.

From the Triassic –

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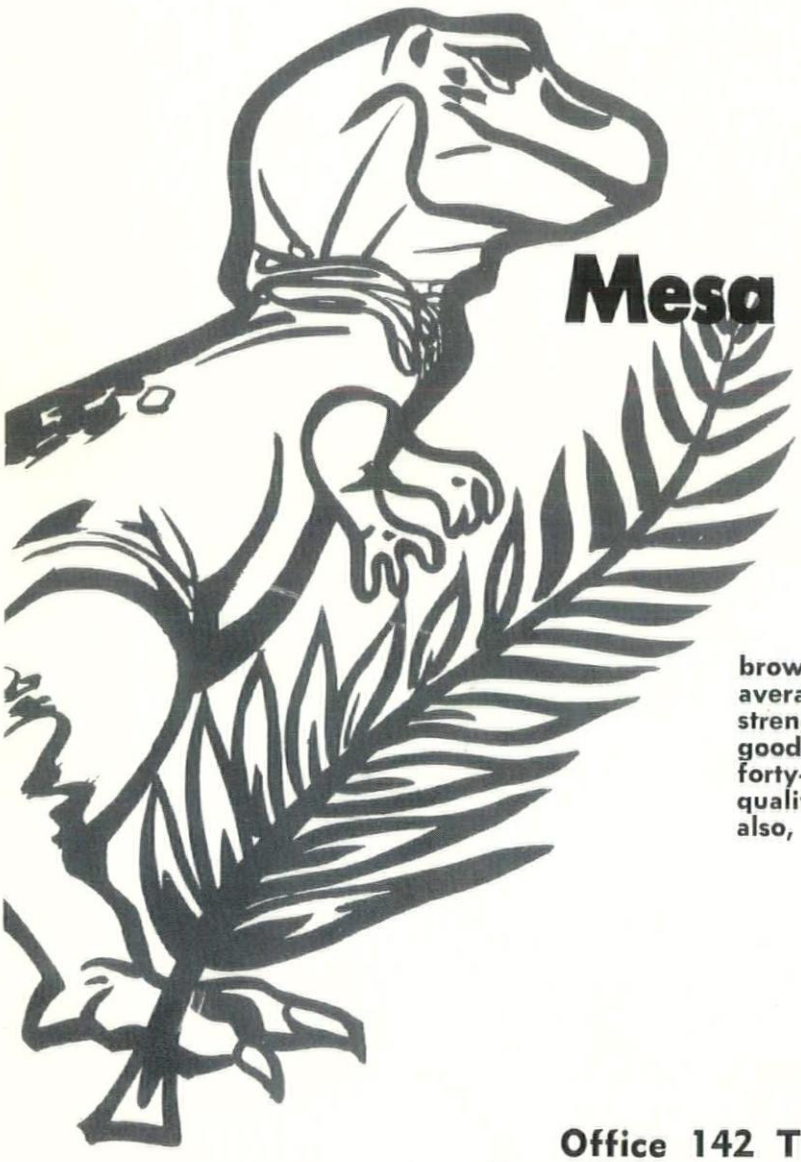

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